

through and help us break this logjam. I hope and pray that it will.

**Q.** Any suggestion——

**The President.** What?

### ***Elían Gonzalez and Asylum Law***

**Q.** Any suggestion as to when a child might be of his own free will?

**The President.** I want to wait. I may want to comment on that later, but I think we should, in all fairness, let the Court of Appeals issue their ruling, see what the state of the law is and then make some sort of judgment about whether legislation is required.

### ***New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani***

**Q.** Any reaction to the Giuliani news yesterday?

**The President.** Well, I wish him and his wife and their children well on the health front and on the domestic front. I think that's all there is—all anybody should want. People in public life have challenges and difficulties like people in other kinds of life do.

And I've always had a good personal relationship with Mayor Giuliani. It's not been affected by the fact that I think my wife would be a better Senator. And on this, I think everybody in New York and everybody in America ought to be rooting for the human side of this to work out. We should wish him well in his struggle over his illness. We should wish that family well. We should want the best for their children, and we should want some space for all of them, out of the glare of publicity, to work their family issues out. That's what I want, and I hope he gets it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden. In his remarks, the President referred to Mayor Giuliani's wife, Donna Hanover, and their children, Andrew and Caroline. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of this exchange. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## **Proclamation 7306—National Equal Pay Day, 2000**

*May 11, 2000*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

### **A Proclamation**

Long before President Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women had proved their ability to contribute to America's labor market. During World War II, when labor shortages offered women an unprecedented opportunity to work outside the home, women excelled at jobs traditionally reserved for men. Yet, despite their enormous contribution to maintaining American production lines, women in the workforce were paid less than their male counterparts.

For most of our Nation's history, in fact, women have served within a sharply segregated workforce, enjoying fewer educational and training opportunities than men and struggling all too often to disprove confining stereotypes about their roles and capabilities. But throughout the decades, women of courage, energy, and determination have continued to enter the workforce and open doors of opportunity for succeeding generations. Today, more women are in the labor force than ever before; the female unemployment rate is at its lowest in more than 40 years; the poverty rate for households headed by women is the lowest ever recorded; and the pay gap has narrowed substantially since 1963.

Despite these gains, the battle for equal pay for women is far from over. Although 37 years have passed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act, the average woman today must still work an additional 17 weeks a year to earn what the average man earns. That pay gap grows wider as women grow older, and it is widest for women of color. African American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men, and Hispanic women earn just 55 cents. While some of

these disparities can be attributed to differences in education, experience, and occupation—which themselves often reflect troubling inequities—several studies confirm that a significant pay gap persists even after we account for these factors.

My Administration has worked hard to ensure that every American is treated with fairness and dignity in the workplace, and this year I proposed a \$27 million equal pay initiative in my fiscal year 2001 budget to combat unfair pay practices against women. This initiative includes \$10 million in funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to identify more quickly and respond more effectively to wage discrimination. The initiative would also enable the EEOC to launch a public service campaign to educate employees and employers about their rights and responsibilities under equal pay laws. In addition, the initiative includes funding for the Department of Labor to train women for jobs they have not traditionally held, such as those in the high-paying technology sector, and to help employers recruit and train qualified women for nontraditional occupations.

I have also urged the Congress to strengthen existing wage discrimination laws by promptly passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. This proposed legislation would provide increased penalties for equal pay violations; prohibit employers from punishing employees who share salary information with co-workers; and provide funding for research on wage discrimination and for increased training for EEOC employees who work on wage discrimination cases.

Throughout the decades, working women have persevered in their struggle for equal pay, buoyed by an unshakable faith in their own skills and self-worth and a firm commitment to the ideals of our democracy. On National Equal Pay Day, I urge all Americans to join the crusade to secure equal pay for women and to create a just and honorable work environment in which all our citizens are rewarded fairly for their talents, experience, and contributions.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States of America, do hereby proclaim May 11, 2000, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon government officials, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, educators, and the American people to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage practices and ensure that all their employees are paid equitably for their work.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15.

### **Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Conferees on the Patients' Bill of Rights and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 11, 2000*

#### ***Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation***

**The President.** First of all, I would like to thank this very impressive array of Senate and House Members for coming, in the midst of quite a busy time up on the Hill, as we try to work out the remaining issues to get a strong Patients' Bill of Rights passed.

I'd like to begin just by expressing my gratitude to, most recently the Senate, but also to the House, for the truly historic Africa/Caribbean Basin trade bill that passed by, I think, 77 votes in the Senate today. And this bill passed with big bipartisan majorities in both Houses. And it's an example of the kind of thing we can do if we work together. And I'm very grateful to the Congress for that and very much looking forward to this bill.

#### ***Patients' Bill of Rights***

Last October the House passed the Norwood-Dingell bill by a big majority, but the conferees have not been able to agree on a bill which could then be taken back to